



# Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) and Tutorial Policy

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. This tutorial policy has been guided in its development by two key documents:

a) **South West College's Higher Education Strategy** which strives for excellence in all aspects of College Support Services and Higher Education provision ensuring a positive experience for all students. The Strategy, which has been clearly aligned to the UK Quality Code, sets out seven key priorities for the implementation of its Higher Education provision. Priority 3 focuses on supporting students in taking responsibility for their learning and helping them to become expert students. It emphasises the allocation of a personal tutor and tutorial processes to both full time and part time students to promote learning and achievement.

b) **This policy has been aligned to and meets the requirement of the revised UK Quality Code under Expectations for standards and Quality.** For further information please click on the following link: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>.

1.2. This Chapter continues by providing eight Indicators of Good Practice. South West College considers these indicators to be highly relevant in developing a robust study skills and tutorial policy:

a) Indicator 4: Higher education providers inform students before and during their period of study of opportunities designed to enable their development and achievement.

b) Indicator 5: To enable student development and achievement, higher education providers put in place policies, practices and systems that facilitate successful transitions and academic progress.

c) Indicator 6: Higher education providers ensure that all students have opportunities to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional development.

## 2. Terms of Reference

2.1. The term 'tutorial' can be used in different ways. This document identifies and describes the main components of the South West College Tutorial System. The system encompasses Personal and Subject (Module) Tutorials, as well as informal academic advice and guidance.

2.2. South West College is committed to ensuring that learners have access to a tutorial programme, which is central to their learning experience, alongside a range of learner support services. Within this policy it is recognised that there will be different needs and expectations for different groups of learners, including Higher Education, part-time, and ESOL students.

2.3. For students on full-time intensive programmes each tutor will support a group of learners, through the vehicle of a common cross-college tutorial programme. This programme will be student-centred and responsive to cohort needs.

2.4. Each full time and part-time student will receive an average of one hour per week taught group tutorial, although practical delivery may be more flexible across an academic year. With some flexibility

where group size is large, students can expect to receive at least two individual tutorial sessions per term. Curriculum managers will monitor and support personal tutors in this role.

2.5. This policy will strive to embrace the key aspects of Minister Farry's Higher Education strategy 'Access to Success 2012' with specific reference to project 6 'Employability' for Higher Education students and the implementation of the Higher Education achievement record.

It is the responsibility of the course tutor to ensure all students who successfully complete their programme receive a copy of their Higher Education Achievement

2.6. Record which must be signed by the Director with an official South West College stamp.

### 3. Responsibilities of the Personal Tutor

3.1. To facilitate delivery of an average of one hour per week group taught tutorial sessions, and individual tutorials, with the aim of promoting personal and academic development of every student.

3.2. The tutor will be responsible for delivering and or arranging

#### Individual Academic Support through:

- an induction programme, including review of initial assessment of basic skills;
- an agreed learning programme and timetable for each student;
- a personal tutorial for each individual students which sets targets and draws up an action plan at least once per term, with reference to any additional support and related action plans;
- monitoring of attendance, punctuality and progress, with termly action planning with individual learners;
- tracking of progress on additional learning support and receipt of regular reports on progress from tutors;
- the development and tracking of employability skills. It is the responsibility of the Higher Education personal tutor to implement a Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) for all full-time Higher Education students.
- The student's individual Higher Education Achievement Record will be developed, monitored and tracked within the tutorial framework.
- assistance in arranging careers interviews;
- advice and assistance on progression to further study/employment and appropriate recording in any progress file;
- academic / job references;
- effective support with study skills and portfolio-building;

- development of, and embedding of literacy and numeracy key skills;
- application and review of stage 1 of the Student Conduct procedure, where necessary, and co-operation with the implementation of further stages;
- information on student progress to parents or Guardians of students under 18;
- up to date student records (transfers, withdrawals, destinations and fee payment).

## **Individual Academic Support through**

- self-esteem and confidence-building
- support with "learning to learn";
- support with development of interpersonal and relating skills, including management of conflict;
- personal and social development, with exploration of differences in perceptions of behavior;
- motivational and self-directive skills;
- cultural and religious awareness and tolerance.

## **In addition the personal tutor will be responsible for:**

- acting as the first point of reference for learners who may have difficulties from time to time;
- making referrals where appropriate to Student Services, Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Services, Additional Learning Support, Connexions or Student Mentors;
- encouraging students to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, and College Policies and Values;
- encouraging students to contribute to the positive ethos of the College and the creation of a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment;
- developing a group identity among students and encourage a sense of belonging to a caring, supportive community;
- Induction to the College, its services and clear information on how to access them;
- A part-time learner handbook;
- Access to progression activities;
- Access to careers materials, job-search and support for UCAS applications through the learning centers;
- Learning centre induction where appropriate;
- On-line advice on benefits, childcare and finance, available through the learning centres;
- Access to resource materials on-line through the College Black board.

### 3.3. Personal Tutorials

The aim of the College's Personal Tutorial System is to provide for all students, a regular, constructive review of overall academic progress and personal development plans at stated intervals appropriate to the level of study. The system embraces:

**Course Tutorials:** Course tutorials are run by the **Course Director** and are timetabled on a regular basis, as determined by the Head of Department and Higher Education Co-ordinator. They should comprise a structured programme to deal with course related issues relevant to the whole cohort. They present an opportunity for students to feedback their views on their academic programme and general student experience. Course tutorials will cover a range of topics which may include guidance on module choice, learning support mechanisms, information on opportunities for international study, industrial placements, initial careers guidance, study skills and exam techniques. Course tutorials will also include formal Student/Staff meetings. The programme effectively begins with induction and continues throughout the course. One important function of the Course Tutorial Programme is to ensure that students fully understand information provided to them in such documents as the Higher Education Quality Handbook, Course Handbooks and Specifications. The primary purpose of the course tutorial is for the tutor to monitor and guide the academic progress of the tutee and, additionally, to provide support when problems are encountered which impinge on academic progress. These tutorials also provide an opportunity for individual action planning in the context of personal, academic and career development goals. Individual tutorial records will be kept by both parties as the course progresses, forming the basis of the student's Personal Development Plan. Timetabled slots are identified for course tutorials and individuals can sign up on a voluntary basis. In the case of part time students, it may be necessary for the tutor and tutee to negotiate via email to agree mutually convenient times. Students may request additional tutorials by direct negotiation. Whilst these may occur on an informal basis, their importance should be recognised and therefore a record should be kept of their occurrence. The course tutorial system is supported by inputs from other individuals such the College Careers and Student Services personnel. Records from such meetings will contribute to the student's personal development plan. The course tutorial system is backed up by the central learning support and/or counselling services. The role of the tutor is then to liaise with the relevant specialist(s) to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the individual student's support, both within and external to, the classroom. In order to be successful, it is important that both tutor and tutee participate actively in the course tutorial system.

## 4. Tutorials

4.1. Subject (Module) Tutorials - This aspect of the College Tutorial System aims to support students' learning in the discipline-related context. Such tutorials are, in the main, delivered by the teaching staff for the relevant subject or module and can therefore be considered part of the academic provision.

4.2. Formal Module Tutors (Tutor) - These are an integral element of certain modules. They are part of the formal delivery and comprise part of the teaching time allocated to the module. They are detailed on the Module Specification and may replace conventional delivery methods such as lectures. As with other small group activities, such as Seminars and Workshops, there is an expectation that

students prepare for and actively participate in, module tutorials. In some instances work undertaken for module tutorials may form part of the assessment strategy for the module.

4.3. Course Work Tutorials (Tutor) - In a number of modules the assessment strategy may involve a discussion between the tutor and student on an individual or group basis. This may occur, for example, when a student is able to negotiate his/her assignment topic or where a group has to negotiate the allocation of individual responsibilities within a particular project. Such tutorials are often critical to the successful completion of the particular piece of coursework and are, therefore, integral to the assessment strategy of the module. Any requirement to attend such a tutorial should be included on the assignment briefing document.

All of the above are important in the development of students' independent learning skills and for encouraging active participation in the learning process as they progress through their programmes of study.

4.4. Formal Support Tutorials (HE Academic Support advisory tutorial) - These are sessions which run alongside the normal delivery of a module which students can attend on an optional basis to overcome particular difficulties or remedy deficiencies relating to the curriculum area e.g. referencing. These tutorials are additional to the teaching time allocated to the module and are not detailed on the Module Specification. There is normally an expectation that students prepare for and actively participate in such sessions. Work undertaken for support tutorials may, on occasions be assessed but this is performed on a formative basis to assist the learning process and the results are not formally recorded as part of the assessment strategy for the module

## **5. Informal Academic Advice and Guidance (Course Management/Student Services)**

In many instances, supplementary specific support is provided on an informal basis with staff responding to individual student needs as these are identified. South West College operates an 'open door' policy, a flexible system for academic appointments with individual students, and staff commonly offer advice and support through email communications. These forms of informal support, which have been a feature of Higher Education at South West College, are highly valued by students and can make a significant contribution to their academic success.

With increasing student numbers, such informal support places a heavy burden on academic staff workloads and there is a danger that certain students will place particularly heavy demands on limited staff time at the expense of their peers. The aim should be to achieve an appropriate balance between students' individual learning autonomy and support as necessary.

Students should therefore be encouraged to use the Student Staff Consultative Committee meetings, Student Services and Carecall as the main avenues to problem-solving and, where necessary, to seek help on behalf of all the individuals who are experiencing difficulty with a particular aspect of the curriculum.

The above framework forms the backbone of the student support and guidance system at South West College.

## 6. Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR)

The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) provides a single comprehensive record of a learner's achievement, as recommended by the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group in the [Beyond the Honours Degree – the Burgess Group Final Report](#) (October 2007).

The HEAR enables institutions to provide a detailed picture of student achievement throughout a students' time at university, including academic work, extra-curricular activities, prizes and employability awards, voluntary work and offices held in student union clubs and societies that have been verified by the institution.

The HEAR is an electronic document produced by a higher education institution that provides a record of student achievement during their period of study. In its printed paper form it is no longer than six pages. It adheres to a template (please see images below), incorporating the European Diploma Supplement, and is verified by the Academic Registrar or equivalent officer. It may be accessed at any time during a student's career with the institution and afterwards.

The HEAR is made available at the time of graduation, at which point its main purpose is to capture the totality of a student's performance and to enable a student to represent a wide range of their achievements to employers and postgraduate tutors, thereby enhancing their employability.

The HEAR can also function as a formative tool, which may be available and used from a student's entry to higher education and throughout their higher education experience. It may be used:

- as a basis for reviewing progress and planning future activities, whether individually or with support from a tutor;
- to support student engagement in opportunities beyond the curriculum;
- as an aide memoire for students in making applications which may be needed before the final award is made, e.g. for sandwich placements and internships; permanent employment; further study or training opportunities;
- by employers and tutors to verify statements made by the student (subject to the appropriate permissions).

The HEAR has the potential to fulfil students' increased expectations for readily accessible public information. It incorporates detail on degree content and module marks, including assessments, such as timed examinations, presentations and group work. The provision of this richer record of student activity 'adds value' to the student experience through its potential to encourage students to make the best use of their time at university.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

7.1. The College will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.

7.2. The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this Policy on a regular basis, in consultation with the

recognised trade unions, statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in line with models of good practice.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chief Executive)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman of Governing Body)

## Document Development

Please complete with details regarding the development of this Policy.

### D1. Working Group

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Position

### D2. Consultation

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Please refer to Equality Screening Consultation Guidance.

Name	Organisation	Date

### D3. Approval Dates:

Details	Date Approved
Equality Screening <i>(please refer to Equality Screening Guidance)</i>	
Quality Checked <i>(please refer to Quality Checklist)</i>	
SLT	
Governing Body <i>(SLT to decide if PPS needs to go to Governing Body)</i>	

### D4. Communication Plan:

Please provide details and dates as to how this policy will be communicated, implemented and disseminated:

Action:	Action by:	Date:

**D5. Document History**

Issue no. under review  (Please see the front page)	Date of review:  (Date)	Who was involved in reviewing the document?  (Name/s)	Were changes made to the document after reviewing?  (Yes or No)	If changes have been made, please provide brief details:	New Issue No.	If Yes, did the document need to go through consultation again?  (Yes*/No)	If Yes, did the document need to be Equality Screened again?  (Yes*/No)	If Yes, date those affected by document will be alerted of updated document:  (Date)

\* If you answered ‘Yes’ in columns E or F, you must forward details of additional consultation and/or screening to the Equality Officer.